

Next Generation Model Trial Courts Project

INTRODUCTION:

The **Next Generation Model Trial Courts Project** is designed to provide funding and technical assistance to approximately 12 trial court locations to test the local application aspects of delivery of trial court services and administrative consolidation in a variety of judicial environments.

The Next Generation project will build on the experience of the demonstration projects now functioning on a temporary experimental basis, in Barry, Berrien, Iron, Isabella, Lake, and Washtenaw counties, and in the multi-county circuit that includes Crawford, Kalkaska, and Otsego counties. Among the benefits demonstrated in those jurisdictions are faster case processing, decreased costs, and increased revenue collection. The results of the demonstration projects to date, although generally very positive, have not been uniform. The Next Generation project will help determine which features of trial court consolidation and coordination have statewide benefit, which should remain as optional features, and which should be subject to local “customizing.”

PROGRAM AREAS:

The state portion of the funding for the project will be used primarily to assist with planning, facilitating, evaluating and implementation initiatives. The following “Key Program Areas” will be given priority for both planning project and implementation grant applications. A broader focus on multiple areas will be one of the criteria utilized for application review and selection.

- **Coordinated Trial Court Operations**
- **Modernized Technology; Customized Application of Innovative Management Tools**
- **Simplified Administrative Infrastructure**
- **Family-focused Delivery of Trial Court Services**
- **Streamlined Docket Processes**
- **Improved Access to Justice**

The selection process for each Next Generation model trial court participant was based on the following criteria: a single county funding unit focus; cross-section of geography and demography of Michigan; commitment of local resources for planning and implementation initiatives; experience of judges and court staff in undertaking innovative projects; potential for cooperation of funding units; potential for cooperation of non-judicial branch agencies that perform court related duties; commitment to establish a Judicial Management Council for all courts participating in the project; commitment to Supreme Court appointment of a single chief judge for administration of the project; and strong judicial leadership with a commitment to consensus building.

The following jurisdictions were selected and are participating in the project; (Twelve (12) locations involving thirty-two (32) courts)

Cheboygan County Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Kalamazoo County Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Marquette County Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Genesee County Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Midland County Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Muskegon County Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Arenac, Ogemaw and Roscommon Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Muskegon County Circuit, District and Probate Courts
Oakland County Circuit and Probate Courts
Livingston County Circuit and Probate Courts
Ingham County Circuit and Probate Courts
Eaton County Circuit and Probate Courts